

From: Vina Colley [mailto:vcolley@earthlink.net]
Sent: Friday, October 28, 2016 4:26 PM
To: DOL Energy Advisory Board Information
Subject: Please submit for public record

October 28, 2016

To: U.S. Department of Labor's Advisory Board on Toxic Substances and Worker Health for the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA)

Re: Advisory Board Should Gather and Implement Input from the Former Workers of the Portsmouth/PiketonDOE Facility

Greetings,

My name is Vina Colley, and I am a sick worker from the former DOE controlled Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Piketon, Ohio. I am co-founder of National Nuclear Workers for Justice (NNWJ) and PRESS (Portsmouth/Piketon Residents for Environmental Safety and Security).

We, the former workers of DOE's Piketon facility, are urging you to have a meeting in Portsmouth, Ohio where in 1999 we released documents to Mary Byrd Davis who broke the story to the national news media exposing toxic substance pollution far above regulated limits at the Piketon plant and other U.S. DOE atomic weapons facilities. The substances contaminating these facilities included plutonium, UF₆, technetium, neptunium, and a host of various other heavy metals and toxic chemicals.

Shortly after the story of DOE's polluted atomic facilities was nationally publicized, The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA) was implemented to rectify DOE's failure to protect their atomic weapons facilities' workers from the aforementioned exposures. Unfortunately, the legislators relied on the recommendations of DOE's experts in the drafting of program. The government hired the wolves to guard the hen house, so to speak. In legalese this is referred to as CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

The end result of the legislators allowing DOE's experts to design the EEOICPA is a confusing, convoluted maze of a compensation program requiring claimants to prove dosage and exposures, when these experts knew damn well this task would be close to impossible considering the fact that many of the facilities weren't monitored properly, if at all, and many records were lost, destroyed, or remain classified. Consequently, 15 years after the implementation of this program, less than 25% of seriously ill former

workers have been awarded medical cards and compensation. Thousands of these former workers have died while waiting on their compensation. It appears as though only the workers lucky enough to locate records that the DOE didn't lose or classify get compensated.

This failure of the EEOICPA could have been prevented. As far as we, the former atomic weapons facility workers here in Portsmouth are concerned, back in 1999, when it was made clear that these facilities were contaminated way above regulated levels, IMMEDIATE medical coverage and IMMEDIATE compensation should have been awarded to all workers made ill from these hazardous substances. In fact, the legislators should have implemented an agency tasked with proactively tracking down former sick workers of toxic sites, and providing them with immediate medical benefits and compensation.

Per the latest "streamlining" by the DOL's Advisory Board, these latest recommendations could hardly be considered streamlining at all. In fact, these recommendations add more burden to the claimants, suggesting more interviews with bureaucrats and more paperwork processes.

It should be simple. If you were exposed to, and made ill from hazardous toxins exceeding regulated levels at a DOE controlled facility, you should get a medical card and compensation. PERIOD. EMPLOYMENT RECORDS & DOCTOR'S DIAGNOSIS SHOULD BE ENOUGH PROOF as it has been thoroughly established that proving exact dosage and exposure is next to IMPOSSIBLE.

Again, we are urging the Advisory Board to schedule and publicize a meeting here in the Portsmouth/Piketon area soon, in order to address the concerns of our area's former atomic weapons facilities workers.

Sincerely,

Vina Colley, On Behalf of Myself and all of the Former Workers of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant